



YMCA INNOVATIONS

Welcome!



Programs in HRM

Gender Based
Violence
Prevention
Project

Child and Youth
Settlement

Employment &
Education
Navigation

Active
Living

2SLGBTQIA+

Crisis
Intervention,
Prevention and
Integration

Canada Connects
& Volunteer
Coordination



YREACH Settlement & Language Services

Over 1800 clients
10 Settlement hubs
Over 20 Language
Instruction sites

Programs
offered across
the province



YMCAs located across Nova Scotia are hubs of community connection and collaboration.



“Adapt lessons for lower English levels.”

“Educate students on planning for university and how to graduate.”



“Test students in English when they start school - so they know where they are and how they are improving. Many students don't improve.”

"WHAT I WISH MY TEACHER KNEW" video project

A VIDEO PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TEACHERS UNION. STUDENTS SHARE WHAT THEY WISH THEIR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS KNEW ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION EXPERIENCE. THE VIDEO WAS SHARED WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA.



School Settlement

School Settlement Program on site in 42 schools in HRM with the objective of supporting newcomer parents and children to be actively engaged in new school communities

- On-site School Settlement Workers
- Orientation Sessions
- Home & School Engagement
- Awareness Raising Presentations
- Linking and referral to school and community resources



Youth Outreach

Youth Outreach programming for young people aged 13- 18 that develops leadership skills, independence and a social network that are essential to sense of belonging.

- Homework Clubs
- Gender specific programming
- Leadership Development
- Community Involvement
- Service Leadership
- Recreational
- Social activities



Project Goals

For the YMCA &
Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Develop youth leadership skills and confidence

Support youth-led initiatives that implement change in the community

Bring student voices and experiences to the forefront

Make it accessible professional development tool for educators across the province



Making the Video

Youth selected the topic for their leadership project

The YMCA partnered with the NS Teachers Union to share youth experiences and develop and professional development tool

YMCA held four focus groups with youth in Junior High and Senior High Schools

The YMCA leadership team met weekly to plan, prepare, and film the video



What I Wish My Teacher Knew Video



Sharing the resource

Summer Learning Academy
Conference for teachers, Nova
Scotia, Summer 2021, 2022, and
2023

Diversity and Inclusion Professional
Development training for school
administration staff in Nova Scotia,
2023

“Barriers to Education for Newcomer
Youth” presentations with partner
organizations



New PD resource for teachers supports newcomer students

The NSTU partnered with the YMCA Youth Outreach program to learn about newcomer students' school experiences in providing teachers help in supporting these students' particular needs. Simply having youth think about: "What I Wish My Teacher Knew" has resulted in a new resource in English and French for teachers in Nova Scotia which includes a video, and supporting discussion documents for professional learning.

"I have had the privilege of working with newcomer students during my teaching career," says NSTU president Paul Wozney. "Helping them learn has been one of the highlights."

Bringing student voice and experience to the forefront in an accessible, teacher-friendly, easy-to-use, authentic resource is the philosophy behind this project.

"Teachers of newcomer students in Nova Scotia including myself, have struggled with understanding the needs of those students, and how to support them," continues Wozney. "There are few resources available, and I often wished there was a book, article or video that could help us figure out what we needed to succeed together."



This new resource, developed by NSTU's executive staff officer Miguëlle Légère, helps to shed light on what newcomer students need to succeed through a *What I Wish My Teacher Knew* video, featuring six students' powerful stories and incorporating feedback from other newcomer students through YMCA's Youth Outreach program. The featured students are members of the YMCA's Youth Action Leadership Team, led by Amy Belanger, Youth Outreach Program Coordinator, YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs and Fadi Hamdan, Youth Outreach Supervisor.

"I was overjoyed that the NSTU had the opportunity to work with youth to develop this resource for teachers," he adds. "Because of the generosity and leadership of newcomer students, teachers in Nova Scotia now have a resource to lean on to develop the understanding and empathy needed to thrive in the classroom with newcomer students and their families."

Some of the "things" newcomer students "wish their teacher knew" include: Give us time, explain things and speak slowly; Try to pronounce our names; Education systems are very different in other countries, we're dealing with a lot of culture shock; I have a lot of skills and interests outside of school; Parents don't know English and we don't get help with our homework; and We have a lot going on.

"The courage these youth have shown in talking about their experiences will open many eyes and hearts and help teachers and newcomers experience greater success at school," says Légère.

The NSTU hopes this project will continue and incorporate the perspectives of younger students. "We said this resource is amazing and they can't wait to share it with their peers. Elementary school teachers are hoping to use it with their students of younger students as well," concludes Wozney.

<https://sites.google.com/view/what-i-wish-my-teacher-knew/tips-and-tricks-for-educators>



“Parents don't know English and we don't get help with homework. We take on a lot of family responsibilities.”



“Try to pronounce my name.”
“Give us time, explain things and speak slowly.”



“Education systems are different in other countries. Teachers could ask about that.”
“You can work hard and still fail.”



“We have a lot going on. We need your patience. Show me that you are ready to help and not that I'm a problem.”

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth Centre for Immigrant Programs
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Thank you!

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